



Interim KS5 minimum standards

What the KS5 minimum standards are

This document describes how the Department for Education (DfE) applied minimum standards to the performance of schools and colleges in the 2014 to 2015 academic year. The precise measure and its application for 2015 to 2016 academic year will be agreed in due course. More information can be found on the [16 to 19 accountability headline measures: technical guide](#). In the meantime this document provides a useful explanation of the measure.

DfE is continuing to use the existing point scores from the interim minimum standards from 2014 to apply to the 2014 to 2015 academic year, with the percentage of pupils required to obtain these scores remaining at 45%. As before, the standards cover all schools and colleges for 16- to 18-year-olds. Schools' and colleges' performance in A levels, other academic and vocational qualifications taken at level 3 (the same level as an A level) are used to identify poor performance. By establishing separate measures for performance in academic and vocational qualifications, comparing like with like, we are able to build a clear picture of how institutions are performing in different areas of their level 3 provision.

In the 2014 to 2015 academic year, a school sixth form or college will be seen as underperforming if its results show that:

- fewer than 45% of students achieve an average point score per entry in vocational qualifications of 194 points
- fewer than 45% of students achieve an average point score per entry in academic qualifications of 172 points

It is possible for a provider to fail the vocational minimum standard or the academic minimum standard or both. If a school sixth form or college falls below either the vocational or the academic point score thresholds the department will give notice to the school or college that their performance is inadequate and needs to improve. This could be a verbal notice or a written notice. The department will adopt a similar approach with FE colleges that fall below the standard.

Who and what is included in the KS5 minimum standards

Qualifications

The standards are based on all level 3 qualification entries that students aged 16 to 18 take in schools and colleges. The standards use the same data that are reported in the KS5 performance tables.

Each level 3 qualification is defined as either a vocational or an academic qualification.

Further Education providers

All maintained mainstream providers of further education included in the KS5 performance tables are in scope for the application of these standards. That includes local authority maintained school sixth forms, academy school sixth forms, 16 to 19 academies, UTCs, Studio Schools, sixth-form colleges and general FE colleges. However any provider with fewer than 11 students taking either vocational or academic qualifications will be excluded from the corresponding minimum standard.

Students

Separate inclusion rules apply to the academic and vocational minimum standards. To be included in the academic minimum standards calculations, a student must be 16, 17 or 18 (age at the start of the academic year) and have been entered for at least 1 level 3 academic qualification with a size, based on guided learning hours, equivalent to at least 1 A Level, during the 2014 to 2015 academic year.

Similarly, to be included in the vocational minimum standards calculations, a student must be 16, 17 or 18 (age at the start of the academic year) and have been entered for at least 1 level 3 vocational qualification with a size, based on guided learning hours, equivalent to at least 1 A Level, during the 2014 to 2015 academic year.

Calculation

There are two elements to the minimum standards; academic and vocational.

The highest average point scores, for vocational and academic qualifications, for the bottom 5 per cent of post 16 schools and colleges, have been calculated.

This establishes the vocational and academic point scores under which the bottom 5 per cent of further education providers fall and gives a minimum standard point score. This year DfE is continuing to use the 5th percentile of academic year 2011 to 2012 for vocational and academic qualifications. This means the point scores remain at 194 points per entry for vocational qualifications and 172 points for academic qualifications.

45 per cent of students in a further education provider have to achieve above the relevant point scores for a school or college to be above the minimum standard.

Calculating the average academic and vocational point scores per entry per student

The average point score per entry per student is calculated as the sum of the points awarded to each student, divided by the sum of the qualification sizes, as determined by their guided learning hours, for each student.

For example:

- student A achieves 2 A levels at grade A (worth 270 points) and one A level at grade B (worth 240 points). As each entry has a size of one, the sum of entry sizes is the same as the sum of the entries; so:

- sum of points = $(2 \times 270) + 240 = 780$
- sum of points/sum of entry sizes = $780/3 = 260$
- average academic point score per entry = 260
- student B achieves two A levels at grade A (worth 270 points) and one AS level in a different subject at grade B (worth 120 points). The two A levels each have a size of one and the AS level has a size of 0.5, so the sum of entry sizes is 2.5.
- sum of points = $(2 \times 270) + 120 = 660$
- sum of entry sizes = $2 \times 1 + 0.5 = 2.5$
- sum of points/sum of entry sizes = $660/(2.5) = 264$
- average academic point score per entry = 264
- student C achieves 2 BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diplomas. One at grade D (worth 225 points) and one at grade M (worth 195 points). As each entry has a size of one, the sum of the point scores is divided by twice the sum of the entries; so:
- sum of points = $225 + 195 = 420$
- sum of points/sum of entry sizes = $420/(2 \times 1) = 210$
- average vocational point score per entry = 210
- student D achieves a BTEC level 3 extended diploma at grade DDD (worth 675 points) and a BTEC subsidiary diploma at grade M (worth 195 points). The BTEC level 3 diploma has a size of three and the BTEC Subsidiary Diploma has a size of one, so the sum of entry sizes is three.
- sum of points = $675 + 195 = 870$
- sum of entry sizes = $3 + 1 = 4$
- sum of points/sum of entry sizes = $870/(4) = 217.5$
- average vocational point score per entry = 217.5
- student E achieves 1 BTEC level 3 diploma at grade MM (worth 390 points) and 1 A level at grade B (worth 240 points). The BTEC level 3 diploma entry has a size of two, whereas the A level entry has a size of one; so:
- sum of vocational points = 390
- sum of points/sum of entry sizes = $390/(2) = 195$
- average vocational point score per entry = 195
- sum of academic points = 240
- sum of points/sum of entry sizes = $240/(1) = 240$
- average academic point score per entry = 240

Calculating the proportion of pupils in each provider who achieve an average point score per entry equal.

The average point score per entry is calculated for all pupils in each provider, separately for academic and vocational qualifications. This allows the proportion of pupils equal to/above the required point score to be calculated for each provider against the academic and vocational standards as relevant. If fewer than 45% of students achieve the required average point score per entry in vocational or academic qualifications then the provider will fail the corresponding minimum standard.

For example:

- college A has 20 pupils studying academic qualifications and 20 students studying vocational qualifications.

15 academic pupils achieve an average point score per entry above or equal to the academic point score of 172 and 5 achieve an average point score per entry below this. Therefore 75% of academic pupils achieve an average point score per entry in academic qualifications of at least 172 points and so the college passes the academic minimum standard.

Similarly 15 vocational pupils achieve an average point score per entry above or equal to the vocational point score of 194 and 5 achieve an average point score per entry below this. Therefore 75% of vocational pupils achieve an average point score per entry in vocational qualifications of at least 194 points and so the college also passes the vocational minimum standard.

- college B has 30 pupils studying academic qualifications and 30 pupils studying vocational qualifications.

10 academic pupils achieve an average point score per entry above or equal to the academic point score of 172 and 20 achieve an average point score per entry below this. Therefore 66% of academic pupils achieve an average point score per entry in academic qualifications below 172 points and so the college fails the academic minimum standard.

20 vocational pupils achieve an average point score per entry above or equal to the vocational point score of 194 and 10 achieve an average point score below this. Therefore 66% of vocational pupils achieve an average point score per entry in vocational in vocational qualifications of 194 points and so the college passes the vocational minimum standard.

- college C has 40 pupils studying vocational qualifications and no pupils studying academic qualifications.

20 vocational pupils achieve an average point score per entry above or equal to the vocational point score of 194 and 20 achieve an average point score per entry below this. Therefore 50% of vocational pupils achieve an average point score per entry of 194 points and so the college passes the vocational minimum standard. As no pupils studied academic qualifications the academic minimum standard is not applicable to this college.